

## **WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM (WHIP)**

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for landowners that wish to develop and improve wildlife on private lands. Technical and cost-sharing assistance is available to help establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

WHIP's goals specific for Tennessee are to restore or enhance:

- Critical upland and wetland wildlife habitat.
- Habitat for threatened and endangered species.
- Riparian habitats beneficial to fish and aquatic species.

Special emphasis is placed on improving native grassland and early successional shrub habitats across the state. The establishment of native warm season grasses, riparian buffers, and field borders, along with fescue eradication, are the most common practices being applied through WHIP. Eradication of fescue, a low quality wildlife plant, is key to establishment of warm season grasses and other native plants that are high quality wildlife cover and food. Tennessee currently has over 230 WHIP contracts covering over 10,000 acres. Another 82 applications are active pending appropriations of congressional funding.